



*Helping You Live Healthier Every Day*

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**OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH** • Center For Community Health  
Community Injury Prevention Program • Miriam Nkemnji • 504.568.8494

# Holiday Safety Tips

## Trees

### Fire

- Many artificial trees are fire resistant. If you buy an artificial tree, look for a statement specifying that the tree is fire resistant.
- A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree. To check for freshness, remember:
  - A fresh tree is green.
  - Fresh needles are hard to pull from branches.
  - When bent between your fingers, fresh needles do not break.
  - The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
  - When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows that the tree is too dry.
- Make sure that you place the tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources because heated rooms dry out trees rapidly. Be sure to keep the tree stand filled with water to avoid fire hazards.
- Cut off about two inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood before setting the tree in the tree stand. This helps the tree to continue to absorb water and can keep the tree fresh longer.
- Trim away branches on the trunk so the bottom of the tree can fit deeply into the tree stand. Keep the stand filled with water while the tree is indoors.

### Falling

- Fire is not the only hazard with trees, they can fall. To prevent a tree from falling remember:
  - The tree stand should be sturdy and have its feet widely set for better balance.
  - Make sure that the tree is placed out of the way of household traffic and that no doorways are blocked by it.
  - Be sure that tall or heavy trees have additional support to keep them from toppling over.

## Decorations

- Use only noncombustible or flame-resistant decorations.
- Wear gloves when using spun glass, or "angle hair" to avoid irritation to eyes and skin.
- Never use lighted candles on or near a tree or any other evergreens. Always use nonflammable holders and place candles where they cannot be knocked down.
- Choose tinsel or artificial icicles that are made of plastic non-leaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if consumed by children.

## Lights

- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety. To identify if your lights have been tested, look for a label from an independent testing laboratory.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Discard damaged sets or repair them before using.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house, walls or other firm support to protect from wind damage.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord.
- Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations when you go to bed or leave the house. Lights left on could short out and start a fire.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and any person

touching a branch could be electrocuted. To avoid this danger, use colored spotlights above or beside a tree, never fastened onto it.

- Keep “bubbling” lights away from children. These lights with their bright colors and bubbling movement can tempt curious children to break candle-shaped glass. The glass can cause cuts and children can try to drink the liquid, which contains a hazardous chemical.

In homes with small children, take special care to:

- Avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable.
- Keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children, because the pieces could be swallowed or inhaled.
- Avoid decorations or tree trimmings that resemble candy or food. A child could try to eat them.

## **Fires**

- Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that flue is open.
- Keep a screen before the fireplace all the times when a fire is burning.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings as a bundle of paper can suddenly catch fire and burn intensely.
- Use care with “fire salts” which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals which can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation or vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.

## **Snow**

- Artificial snow sprays can irritate lungs if inhaled.
- To avoid injury, read container labels; follow directions carefully.

## **Toys**

- Follow recommended age ranges on toy packages. Toys that are too advanced could be a safety hazard for younger children.
- Before buying or allowing your child to play with a toy that he has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully. If the toy is appropriate for your child, show him how to use it properly.
- Be careful of holiday gift wrapping, like bags, paper, ribbons and bows. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child.
- Children under age four can choke on small parts contained in toys or games and balls with a diameter of one and three-quarters of an inch or less.
- Children under age eight can choke or suffocate on deflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.
- Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.

## **Paper**

- When making paper decorations, look for materials labeled noncombustible or flame-resistant paper.
- Never place decorations and tree trimming near open flames or electrical connections.
- Remove all wrapping papers from tree and fireplace areas immediately after presents are opened.
- Do not burn papers in the fireplace.

## **Candles**

- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens.
- Always use nonflammable candle holders.
- Keep candles away from other decorations and wrapping paper.
- Place candles where they cannot be knocked down or blown over.

## Food Safety

- Bacteria are often present in raw foods. Be sure to fully cook meats and poultry, and thoroughly wash raw vegetables and fruits.
- Be sure to keep hot liquids and foods away from the edges of counters and tables, where they can be easily knocked over by a young child's exploring hands.
- Wash your hands frequently, and make sure your children do the same.
- Never put a spoon used to taste food back into food without washing it.
- Always keep raw foods and cooked foods separate, and use separate utensils when preparing them.
- Always thaw meat in the refrigerator, never on the countertop.
- Foods that require refrigeration should never be left at room temperature for more than two hours.

## General Rules for Holiday Safety

- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of the reach of children.
- If you smoke, avoid smoking near flammable decorations.
- Make an emergency plan to use if a fire breaks out anywhere in the home. See that each family member knows what to do. PRACTICE THE PLAN!
- Avoid wearing loose flowing clothes - particularly long, open sleeves - near open flames - such as those of a fireplace, stove, or a candlelit table.
- Never burn candles near evergreens. Burning evergreens in the fireplace can also be hazardous. When dry, greens burn like tinder. Flames can flare out of control, and send sparks flying into a room, or up the chimney to ignite creosote deposits.
- Plan for safety! Remember, there is no substitute for common sense. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces, trees, and /or electrical connections.

## Make the Right Call (fill in the emergency numbers for your area)

Medical Emergencies      911 or \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Emergencies      911 or \_\_\_\_\_

Police Emergencies      911 or \_\_\_\_\_

Louisiana Poison Control      1-800-256-9822

*Source: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety  
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